

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 SCA-01 VO-03 DHA-02 L-03

IO-13 EB-07 PRS-01 INR-07 SIL-01 /066 W

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R 170015Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6807

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 10523

STADIS

FOR ASST. SECY. SHLAUDEMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MX, US

SUBJECT: ILLEGAL ALIENS.

REF: A. MEXICO 9867; B) MEXICO 9501

1. SUMMARY: WE ARE EMERGING FROM A STORM OF HARSH CRITICISM TO U.S. EXPULSION OF UNDOCUMENTED MEXICAN MIGRANTS. CHARGES, COMING FROM BOTH GOM OFFICIALS AND JOURNALISTS, HAVE TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN A MASSIVE DEPORTATION CAMPAIGN WHICH IS SEEN HERE AS VIOLATING "HUMAN RIGHTS" OF ILLEGAL ALIENS. ALLEGED DEPORTATION CAMPAIGN HAS ALSO BEEN FREQUENTLY LINKED TO BROADER SUSPICIONS THAT USG IS ATTEMPTING TO DESTABILIZE MEXICO. I BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE CALLED FOR: (A) IN LOW-KEY TONE BUT WITHOUT APOLOGIES, SEEK TO CORRECT PUBLIC RECORD WITH RESPECT TO INS ACTIVITIES AND US IMMIGRATION POLICIES; (B) TAKE CARE THAT WE NOT COMPROMISE OUR SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO EXPEL ALIENS NOT DULY DOCUMENTED TO REMAIN IN U.S.; AND (C) REDOUBLE OUR EFFORTS, THROUGH PARALLEL COMMISSIONS OR OTHERWISE, TO ENGAGE MEXICANS IN A SERIOUS, FRUITFUL SEARCH FOR CO-OPERATIVE MEANS TO DEAL WITH ILLEGAL MIGRATION AND ITS EFFECTS. END SUMMARY.

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2. WE HAVE LATELY PASSED THROUGH ANOTHER STORM OF ABUSE

AND CALUMNY FROM BOTH GOM OFFICIALS AND PRESS WITH REGARD TO TREATMENT OF ILLEGAL ALIENS IN U.S. AND THEIR EXPULSION TO MEXICO. IT IS UNFORTUNATELY TRUE THAT WE EXPOSED OURSELVES TO THIS ABUSE THROUGH INEPT HANDLING--INITIALLY AT LEAST--OF THE NEW EXPERIMENTAL AIR REPATRIATION PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN BY INS. HOWEVER, VILIFICATION IN PRESS AND UNWARRANTED CHARGES BY OFFICIALS BLOSSOMED FAR BEYOND THE TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE AIR REPATRIATION PROGRAM. SOME EXAMPLES:

- FORMER MEXICAN DIPLOMAT WAS REPORTED AUGUST 2 TO HAVE CHARGED THAT U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS PERMITTED MEXICANS TO CROSS ILLEGALLY AND ENTER FIELDS ON U.S. SIDE, THEN SET THOSE FIELDS ABLAZE IN ORDER TO INCINERATE ALIENS.

- A COLUMNIST FOR EXCELSIOR CHARGED THAT U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS PRACTICED MARKSMANSHIP WITH TELESCOPIC LENSES AGAINST MEXICANS ATTEMPTING TO WADE ACROSS RIO GRANDE.

- PRI SENATOR GAMIZ FERNANDEZ ASSERTED AUGUST 1 THAT EXPULSIONS WERE PART OF LARGER FOREIGN-DIRECTED PLOT TO UNDERMINE MEXICAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY.

- EVEN PRESIDENT-ELECT LOPEZ PORTILLO WAS QUOTED AS CHARGING U.S. WITH LONG HISTORY OF INHUMANE TREATMENT OF MEXICANS WORKING "WITHOUT DOCUMENTS" IN U.S.

- ONE EDITORIAL AND COLUMN AFTER ANOTHER TRACED U.S. HISTORY OF MEXICAN-U.S. RELATIONS SINCE WW II IN TERMS OF EXPLOITATION OF CHEAP MEXICAN LABOR TO SUPPORT U.S. MILITARY ADVENTURES AND AS "CANNON FODDER" ON FRONT LINES.

3. WHILE I AM FIRST TO CONCEDE THAT THERE ARE PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS ON BOTH SIDES WITH RESPECT TO MAGNITUDE AND REAL IMPACT OF ILLEGAL MEXICAN MIGRATION TO U.S., THE CLIMATE HERE CLEARLY HAS NOT BEEN RIGHT FOR RATIONAL DEBATE OF THESE ARGUMENTS. TO THE CONTRARY, WE SEEM ONCE AGAIN TO BE WITNESSING AN OUTBURST OF NATIONALIST PARANOIA HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUE AT HAND. FOR REASONS AS YET CONFIDENTIAL

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UNCLEAR TO US, THE GOM PROPAGANDA APPARATUS IS AGAIN TROTting OUT ARGUMENTS AND ACCUSATIONS WHICH SHOULD LONG AGO HAVE BEEN PUT TO REST AND WHOSE ONLY CONCEIVABLE USE AT THIS POINT IS TO EXERT POLITICAL PRESSURES ON THE U.S.

4. THUS IT SEEMS TO ME THE DANGER LIES NOW IN OUR BEING TOO QUICK TO ACCOMMODATE OR IN APOLOGIZING FOR

THE WRONG ACTS. NOT EVEN OUR HARSHTEST CRITIC HERE DENIES OUR SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO EXPEL FROM THE U.S. ANY PERSONS NOT DULY DOCUMENTED TO REMAIN THERE. YET THE VERY PRESSURES BEING PLACED UPON US NOW SEEM DESIGNED TO PERSUADE US TO COMPROMISE THAT BASIC RIGHT. (IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT MEXICO ITSELF WOULD BE LOATH TO SACRIFICE ITS OWN RIGHT TO EXPEL "UNDOCUMENTED" ALIENS AND INDEED REGULARLY EXERCISES THIS RIGHT WITH MIGRANT GUATEMALAN WORKERS IN THE SOUTH OF THIS COUNTRY AND OCCASIONALLY EVEN WITH AMERICANS AND OTHERS IN AN IRREGULAR STATUS).

5. MEXICAN PRESSURES (SOMETIMES APPARENTLY EMOTIONAL AND AT OTHERS COOLLY CALCULATED) ON THIS SUBJECT RESEMBLE THOSE WHICH IN RECENT PAST GAINED NEAR UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE FOR TERM "UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS" AS EUPHEMISM FOR ILLEGAL ALIENS; AND OF NOTION THAT ILLEGAL WORKERS ARE OWED SOME SORT OF SPECIAL CONSIDERATION BY HOST GOVERNMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR ILLEGAL STATUS (THANKS TO RESOLUTIONS IN ILO AND WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE). SIMILAR PRESSURES IN OTHER FORUMS HAVE SECURED ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH NOTIONS AS NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, CERDS AND IN CASE OF WEST COAST COUNTRIES 200-MILE TERRITORIAL SEAS. WE SHOULD BEWARE THAT OUR POSITION ON BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SOVEREIGNTY NOT BE ERODED BUT AT THE SAME TIME TAKE EVERY STEP TO ASSURE THAT OUR RECORD IS CLEAR AS REGARDS HUMANE TREATMENT OF THE ILLEGALS. WE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT KNEE-JERK REACTION TO MEXICAN PRESSURES (ON MATTERS OTHER THAN HUMAN RIGHTS) IS LIKELY TO MAKE OUR LIVES MORE DIFFICULT DOWN THE ROAD, SINCE PROBLEM ITSELF IS CERTAIN TO GROW AT LEAST AS RAPIDLY AS MEXICO'S 3.5 POPULATION GROWTH RATE--NO MATTER WHAT COSMETICS WE

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AGREE TO APPLY TO INS ACTIVITIES.

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 SCA-01 VO-03 DHA-02 L-03

IO-13 EB-07 PRS-01 INR-07 SIL-01 /066 W

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R 170045Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6808

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MEXICO 10523

STADIS

FOR ASST. SECY. SHLAUDEMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

6. WHILE I SEE NO POINT IN ATTEMPTING TO "SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT" THROUGH PUBLIC DEBATE WITH GOM OVER HISTORY OF LABOR MIGRATION TO U.S., I DO THINK THAT LOW-KEYED REPLIES TO PRESS AND MEDIA ARE ALWAYS USEFUL. OUR OFFICIAL CONVERSATIONS ON THE MATTER SHOULD ALSO BE FIRM AND CLEAR, SHOWING UNDERSTANDING FOR MEXICAN PROBLEM WITH POSSIBLE MASS REMOVALS, BUT INSISTING THAT GOM DO MORE TO PREVENT CONTINUED FLOW. WE MAY HAVE FUMBLER IN OUR INITIAL HANDLING OF THE INS AIR REPATRIATION EXPERIMENT, BUT OUR SKIRTS ARE CLEAN-- AND THE GOM KNOWS IT--IN TERMS OF MEETING MEXICANS CONDITIONS FOR CARRYING FORWARD THAT PROGRAM. INDEED, THE SAME IS TRUE WITH RESPECT TO THE OLDER, MORE "INFORMAL" DEPORTATION PROGRAMS OPERATED BY MUTUAL CONSENT BETWEEN OUR TWO IMMIGRATION SERVICES ALONG THE BORDER.

7. I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET MOVING ON SERIOUS EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROBLEM. CLOSE TO TWO YEARS HAVE NOW ELAPSED SINCE PRESIDENTS FORD AND ECHEVERRIA MANDATED REESTABLISHING PARALLEL COMMISSIONS TO COVER THIS SUBJECT. THESE COMMISSIONS TO DATE HAVE HELD ONLY ONE FORMAL AND ONE INFORMAL MEETING, AND ALTHOUGH CLIMATE OF MEETINGS HAS INVARIABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN HOPEFUL, NO NOTABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN REGISTERED AND NO FORWARD MOVEMENT IS NOW DISCERNIBLE ON EITHER SIDE--PROBABLY JUST WHAT THE GOM HOPED FOR IN THE FIRST PLACE.

8. THERE IS, OF COURSE, NO REAL "SOLUTION" TO THE ILLEGAL ALIEN PROBLEM, WHOSE ROOTS LIE IN FUNDAMENTAL DISPARITIES IN STANDARDS OF LIVING BETWEEN

TWO PEOPLES SHARING A 1600 MILE, HIGHLY PERMEABLE BORDER. BUT IMAGINATIVE ACTION COULD HELP (A) TO MITIGATE THE PROBLEM'S EFFECTS AND (B) REDUCE ITS USEFULNESS TO THE MEXICANS AS A POLITICAL PRESSURE POINT. AFTER ALL, OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WITH CONTRASTING ECONOMIES (E.G., FRANCE/SPAIN, GERMANY/YUGOSLAVIA, VENEZUELA/COLOMBIA) HAVE FOUND MECHANISMS FOR HANDLING MIGRATORY WORKER FLOWS PROPORTIONATELY AS LARGE AS OURS AND FOR MINIMIZING POLITICAL FALL-OUT.

9. KEY LIES, I AM CONVINCED, IN SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGING MEXICANS IN BILATERAL COOPERATIVE ACTION TO DEAL WITH MIGRANTS, ENCOURAGING A "HABIT" OF COOPERATION TO TAKE PLACE OF REFLEXIVE CRITICISM OF OUR UNILATERAL EFFORTS (OUR FAILURE TO INVOLVE GOM FROM START IN INS AIR REPATRIATION EXPERIMENT WAS A CLASSIC MISTAKE). MEXICANS ARE NOT GOING TO CUT OFF ILLEGAL MIGRATION TO PLEASE US, BUT THEY ARE GRADUALLY COMING TO RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS PART OF SAME PHENOMENON WHICH IS NOW SWELLING MEXICO'S OWN CITIES WITH JOBLESS REFUGEES FROM BACKWARD COUNTRY-SIDE. VIEWED THUS AS A SHARED PROBLEM, THERE MAY BE BASIS FOR EXPERIMENTING STEP-BY-STEP WITH JOINT ACTION (E.G., AGAINST "ENGANCHADORES" ALONG BORDER, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND NOW OCCURS INFORMALLY, OR IN INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AS PRESENTLY EMANATING FROM SAN DIEGO). THE GOM MAY REALIZE EVENTUALLY THAT A MORE ACTIVE POLICY ON THEIR PART TO PREVENT CONTINUED FLOW OF ILLEGALS IS THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST THE SPECTRE OF THE MASSIVE DEPORTATION WHICH MEXICO FEARS AS SO POTENTIALLY DISRUPTIVE.

10. TO SUM UP (A) WE SHOULD NOT RPT NOT APOLOGIZE FOR PRESENT REPATRIATION PROGRAMS NOR COMPROMISE BASIC CONFIDENTIAL

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PRINCIPLES OF SOVEREIGNTY; (B) WE SHOULD REPLY TO MEDIA QUERIES IN LOW-KEY, FACTUAL WAY AND BE FIRM AND CLEAR IN OFFICIAL CONVERSATIONS; AND (C) WE SHOULD GET MOVING SOON ( IF WE WAIT MUCH LONGER WE SHALL SURELY HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH WITH NEW GOM ADMINISTRATION), THROUGH PARALLEL COMMISSIONS OR OTHERWISE, TO ENGAGE MEXICANS IN EVEN TOKEN COLLABORATION TO BEGIN DEALING SERIOUSLY WITH PROBLEM WHICH PROMISES TO OVERSHADOW ALL OTHERS IN OUR RELATIONS WITHIN A VERY FEW YEARS.  
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